

Testimony of Dr. Elena Tapia
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March 10, 2011

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee's public hearing on S.B. No. 1011 -
An Act Concerning a Reorganization of Connecticut's System of Public Higher Education.

Senator Bye, Representative Willis, Representative Haddad, and other members of the
Committee. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify today.

I am a linguistics professor at Eastern Connecticut State and Chapter President of Eastern's
AAUP. I was on the negotiating team for our current Collective Bargaining Agreement.

As I read the restructuring bill, I am reminded of a famous saying: "The hurrieder I go, the
behinder I get." (White Rabbit)

Like many of my colleagues, I support a trimmer and localized system. My concern today is
about who AAUP will negotiate with for our working conditions. I am troubled that there will be
too great a distance and too little knowledge of AAUP principles in a brand new Board of
Regents. They would have a very, very steep learning curve because – as proposed – they
would govern not only CSU – but also the community colleges and Charter Oak.

This brand spanking new BOR cannot possibly possess the institutional memory which allowed
CSU to build the strong shared governance which we have.

"When Dewey and Lovejoy founded AAUP in 1915, they understood that the integrity of higher
education teaching and research depended on the collective will of the professoriate to protect
academic freedom by enforcing professional standards and due process. [They] believed it was
the faculty's responsibility to ensure that the right material conditions existed in order for these
standards to thrive"*

The restructuring – as proposed – will not provide us with those appropriate material
conditions.

It is difficult to comprehend how future contract negotiations regarding higher education
principles will work successfully in the students' interest.

[The] precedents and standards set by academic collective bargaining raise standards for the
entire academic profession." ** We cannot lose sight of these in a hurried reorganization.

Dealing with more than wages and benefits, our CSU-BOT/CSU-AAUP contract is that agreement in
which faculty have ensured the following material conditions:

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1. greater access to financial and institutional information,
2. establishing criteria and standards for peer evaluation (promotion, tenure, and professional assessment)
3. establishing standards of institutional (internal) governance
4. academic freedom
5. curricular matters

I respectfully ask the committee to slow SB 1011 down and to involve in the conversation those of us who are actually in the classroom and providing direct student support.

Thank you.

Sources:

*Bunsis, AAUP Newsletter, Feb. 23, 2011.

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